



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.7946 | FAX (517) 373.2678
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/stamas/

For Immediate Release
February 17, 2005

Contact: Chad Wing
(517) 373-7946

Sen. Stamas reintroduces resolution regarding mineral and surface rights issues

LANSING – A resolution urging federal and state departments to work together to align the ownership of mineral and surface rights was reintroduced in the Michigan State Senate Wednesday by Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland.

“We need to remove the hurdles in our way so we can better protect the pristine pieces of land across our beautiful state,” said Stamas, sponsor of the resolution.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 6 urges federal agencies to work with Michigan officials to exchange property where appropriate to align the ownership of mineral and surface rights on state and federal lands in Michigan.

“The bottom line is that there are frequently consequences when mineral and surface rights are separated and the Mason Tract is one such example,” Stamas said.

Back in 2003 Savoy Energy announced plans to drill for oil and gas near the AuSable River, generating widespread concern. Their plans call for directional drilling on federal land adjacent to the Mason Tract in order to gain access to minerals (beneath the parcel of land in the Huron Manistee National Forest) leased to Savoy Energy Company by the DNR.

The land had previously been donated to the state by the Mason Family with the condition it remain safe from development.

Residents who believe the Mason Tract should be preserved from the impacts of drilling have expressed concern about the possible negative impact on one of the last remaining near-wilderness areas in the Lower Peninsula. In addition, outdoor sports groups feel certain activities involved with drilling could be harmful to one of Michigan’s most cherished fishing areas.

Recently, the United States Forest Service approved Savoy Energy’s request, but the company still needs a permit from the United States Bureau of Land Management.

The approval granted by the United States Forest Service has already been appealed, effectively delaying any action by the United States Bureau of Land Management until the appeal period has ended.

Michigan has jurisdiction over both mineral and surface rights on 3.8 million acres of land, but mineral rights alone on another 2.1 million acres.

Stamas reintroduced SCR 6, which was passed by the Senate last session term, but not taken up by the House of Representatives.